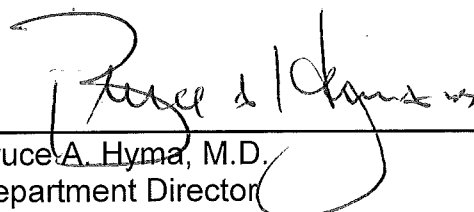




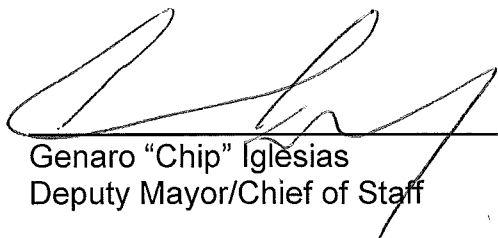
Medical Examiner Department Business Plan

Fiscal Years: 2013 and 2014
(10/1/2012 through 9/30/2014)

Approved by:



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Plan Date: December 21, 2012

Delivering Excellence Every Day



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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Department Mission

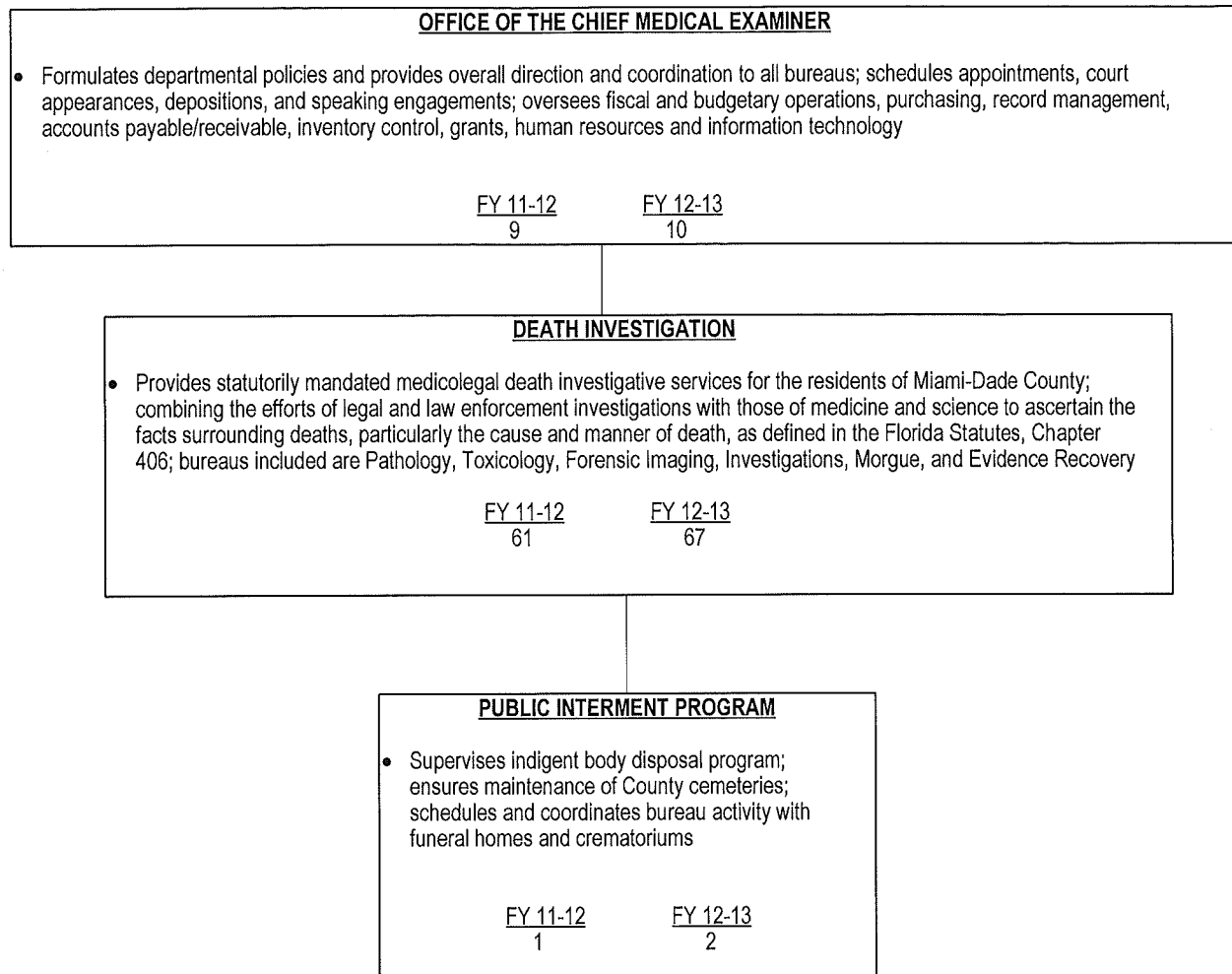
The mission of the Medical Examiner Department is to provide accurate, timely, dignified, compassionate and professional death investigative services for the residents of Miami-Dade County, together with education, consultation and research for local and national medical, legal, academic and law enforcement communities.

The Medical Examiner Department exists to provide statutorily mandated medicolegal death investigative services for the residents of Miami-Dade County. The work of the department focuses on what is generally termed “forensic pathology.” This field of work combines the efforts of legal and law enforcement investigations with those of medicine and science to ascertain the facts surrounding deaths, particularly the cause and manner of death, as defined in Florida Statute, Chapter 406. This mandate translates into a workload of investigating approximately 12,000 deaths annually. Forensic medical and toxicological consultation services, education, and research further define the department’s mission. Apart from our core mission, the department directs the County’s Public Interment Program (PIP). The Public Interment Program provides low-cost disposition for abandoned, unclaimed human remains and for deceased members of indigent Miami-Dade County families.

The department interrelates with many local, state and federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), State Attorney’s and Public Defender’s Offices, Life Alliance Organ Procurement, University of Miami Bone and Tissue Bank, Florida Lions Eye Bank, law enforcement agencies, medical offices and hospitals, funeral homes, and the media. The Medical Examiner Department currently has seventy-nine (79) full-time employees in its various bureaus, which include: the Director’s Office, Pathology, Toxicology, and Operations. Within Operations are: the business office, information technology, records, morgue, photography, investigations, training, and public interment.



Table of Organization



Strategic Alignment Summary

- I. The Department's mission aligns with the following Miami-Dade County Strategic Plan Goals:
 1. Reduced Crime (PS1)
 2. Reductions in Preventable Death, Injury and Property Loss (PS2)
 3. Effective Emergency and Disaster Management (PS3)
 4. Safe and customer-friendly transportation system (TP2)
 5. Economic Development (ED1)
 6. Friendly Government (GG1)
 7. Excellent, Engaged Workforce (GG2)
 8. Efficient and Effective Service Delivery Through Technology (GG3)
 9. Effective Management Practices (GG4)
 10. Goods, services and assets that support County operations (GG5)

Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner Department
FY2012-13 & FY2013-14

Strategic Alignment (cont.)

II. Select Department-related Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives with related departmental Programs & Initiatives:

CODE	STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES
PS1	Reduced crime	
PS1-2	Solve crimes quickly and accurately	Maintain timely evidence collection and investigative services, completion of autopsy protocols and pending cases, toxicological analysis and body disposition approvals in accordance with the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) accreditation.
		Review and process the county's unidentified decedents through the Federal DNA Initiative National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs.org).
		Provide quality, relevant and professional training programs.
		Maintain death scene investigative services by certified medicolegal death investigators.
PS2	Reductions in Preventable Death, Injury and Property Loss	
PS2-1	Reduce response time	Maintain Forensic Evidence Recovery Team (FERT) response time to under 60 minutes.
GG2	Excellent, engaged workforce	
GG2-1	Attract and hire new talent	Support and maintain competitive employee compensation and benefit packages.
		Train qualified pathologists (4) annually in the ACGME-accredited Forensic Pathology Fellowship program. This program provides service delivery to the department and is a consistent, reliable source for quality medical examiners.
GG2-2	Develop and retain excellent employees and leaders	Support and maintain required professional certification for forensic photographers and medicolegal death investigators.
		Renew accreditation with Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).
		Mentor young toxicologists through a tiered organizational structure within the department's toxicology laboratory to prepare for board certification.
		Train qualified dentists through the contractual services of the department's forensic odontologist.
		Achieve Toxicology Laboratory accreditation by American Board of Forensic Toxicology.
GG3	Efficient and Effective service delivery through technology	
GG3-2	Effectively deploy technology solutions	Purchase specialized instruments including liquid chromatograph/mass spectrometers.
		Replace 34 aging digital cameras.
		Maintain and facilitate coordination of unidentified decedents and missing persons; and, review and process the county's unidentified decedents through the Federal DNA initiative (NCIC and Namus.gov).
		Implementation and development of Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS) to include complete data interface capability.
		Implementation and development of Florida Emergency Mortuary Operation Response System (FEMORS) Emergency Management software.
		Continue development of a Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS), and maintain VertiQ® Medical Examiner database software, in order to provide efficient access of toxicology data to law enforcement, criminal justice and legal communities.
		Web access to toxicology laboratory data for outside clients.
		Conversion to paperless department.
GG4	Effective management practice	
GG4-2	Effectively allocate and utilize resources to meet current and future operating and capital needs	Acquire new servers for Forensic Imaging Bureau to provide expanded storage capacity and backup technology. Amplify existing capacity for the department-wide network storage areas and backup strategies.
GG5	Goods, services and assets that support County operations	
GG5-2	Provide well maintained, accessible facilities and assets	Remodel department kitchen.
		Replace/upgrade building's phone system.
		Replace emergency power generator (GSA).



Our Customers

The Miami-Dade Medical Examiner Department provides statutorily mandated medicolegal death investigative services for county residents. In cooperation with various local law enforcement agencies, the department uses the tools of medicine and science to ascertain the facts surrounding deaths in order to determine the cause and manner of death as defined in Florida Statute, Chapter 406.

The specialized nature of the Medical Examiner Department's work guarantees a restricted and specialized customer/market base. Since death is not bound by social, economic, political or legal parameters, the department serves a diverse group of customers with various expectations.

For the most part, our customers are drawn to us by virtue of the decedents who are brought to our facility for investigation and certification. The most personal services are those provided to bereaved next-of-kin who call and visit the department daily to seek information and assistance. Each decedent draws an investigating police agency as a consequence of the jurisdiction in which the death occurs, and each decedent will be followed by family members. As a government agency established by state statute and funded by public dollars, our customers are clearly defined.

Customers	Needs
Bereaved families	Prompt release of remains, sensitivity, professionalism
Funeral homes	Prompt release of remains; clear, accurate death certificate
Law enforcement	Prompt response to crime scenes, professional cooperation
Judicial system	Accurate death investigative information
Media	Prompt release of public record information
Federal, State and County Government	Adherence to County ordinances, rules, regulations and directives
Hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities	Prompt response, professional cooperation

Each year, the department hosts forensic seminars, such as the Medicolegal Investigation of Death and the International Forensic Photography Workshop. These seminars draw professionals and students from across the country and from other countries.

Every three years the Florida Medical Examiner Commission conducts customer satisfaction surveys of all the customers listed above and provides feedback to the Chief Medical Examiner.

The area of forensic toxicology services is a competitive environment with private and public sectors competing for contracts. The department's Toxicology Laboratory has participated in the competitive bid process for laboratory services for other Medical Examiner jurisdictions and has been successful in being awarded contracts with other counties. Such bids have

Departmental Business Plan and Outlook

Department Name: Medical Examiner Department
FY2012-13 & FY2013-14

Our Customers (cont.)

been competitive with the private sector. Maintaining a competitive edge has been challenged by rising costs of petroleum-based products together with the personnel and operational limitations of the toxicology laboratory.

The department serves the residents of Miami-Dade County, many local, state and federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), State Attorney's and Public Defender's Offices, Life Alliance Organ Procurement, University of Miami Bone and Tissue Bank, Florida Lions Eye Bank, insurance companies, private not-for-profit organizations, law enforcement departments, medical offices and hospitals, funeral homes, and the media.

KEY ISSUES

1. Critical to the department's mission is to obtain sufficient operational and capital funding in order to:
 - a. Meet our statutory obligations to the residents of Miami-Dade County, law enforcement, the judiciary, the state of Florida, private industry and the medical and legal communities
 - b. Attract and retain quality employees
 - c. Meet and maintain National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) and Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education(ACGME) accreditation standards
 - d. Remain current with laboratory and investigative technology in order to address continuous, emerging investigative challenges
 - e. Provide in-house and off-site training and educational opportunities for departmental staff to meet emerging investigative challenges
2. Acquire Toxicology Laboratory accreditation through the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT)
3. Disaster and mass causality preparedness

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

1. Renew accreditation with NAME and ACGME
2. Acquire Toxicology Laboratory accreditation through ABFT
3. Acquire current laboratory technology:
 - a. High resolution liquid chromatograph/ion trap mass spectrometer to address the emerging class of designer drugs impacting our community
 - b. Vacuum oven for proper laboratory glassware preparation
 - c. Digital pathology scanner to record and archive histological data
4. Acquire high density mobile filing system for efficient storage of laboratory records



Priority Initiatives (cont.)

5. Replace the Noritsu Digital Minilab with current technology to control service contract and maintenance costs while eliminating wet chemical processing and waste disposal costs
6. Acquire new servers for the Imaging Bureau to provide expanded storage for growing department needs and required backup technology
7. Replace and upgrade the department's emergency power generator
8. Renovate department kitchen
9. Replace the Morgue Bureau's commercial washer and dryer

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The top priority of the department is to restore personnel and operating funding sources to the proper service levels. As a state Medical Examiner Commission mandate, the department will complete the review and processing of all county unidentified decedents through the Federal DNA Initiative and maintain current data in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (www.NamUs.gov). Disaster and mass casualty preparedness will be a continuing challenge as we restore and train staff while moving forward with integrating data management software through FEMORS. As time and our limited budget permits, the department desires to accomplish the following in the next three to five years:

1. Achieve toxicology laboratory accreditation by ABFT and renewed accreditation by NAME and ACGME
2. Develop, implement and integrate a billing module into the existing case management software (CME)
3. Implement a multi-year plan to convert all existing Medical Examiner case files into a state certified, digital database
4. Become a web host for statewide Medical Examiner data management
5. Utilize GOB funds to finish the renovation of the laboratory
6. Implement a bar code system for chain of custody
7. Restore funding for travel, training licenses, etc.
8. Replace and upgrade the toxicology laboratory nitrogen generator

